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FOR Immediate Release

May 28, 2020

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State Scholarship Winners Announced

Topeka, KS – Scholarships totaling \$10,000, were awarded to five recent Kansas high school graduates who demonstrated their knowledge of money management and the importance it has on their future in this year’s Kansas Financial Scholars Essay Contest.

Riley Buss, from Jefferson West High School, earned the first-place designation in the annual contest sponsored by the Kansas Office of the State Bank Commissioner (OSBC), the Kansas Insurance Department (KID), and its division, the Office of the Securities Commissioner (KSC). Riley plans to attend Kansas State University to pursue a degree in agricultural economics and will receive a \$3,000 scholarship towards her education.

The second-place scholarship of \$2,500 was awarded to Mallory Beltz from Sterling High School. Heather Mills from Derby High School earned third, and a \$2,000 scholarship. Fourth, with a \$1,500 scholarship was awarded to Emma Elder from Nemaha Central High School, and the fifth scholarship of \$1,000 goes to Josseline Alba from Wichita North High School.

When asked about this year’s scholarship contest, Bank Commissioner David Herndon said “The Office of the State Bank Commissioner is delighted to once again co-sponsor the Kansas Financial Scholars Essay Contest and congratulate this most qualified group of high school graduates as they prepare to continue their educations. Each has demonstrated a clear understanding of the vital importance of money management that will serve them well as they begin their next, and future life journeys. Young emerging leaders like these five will indeed guide their families and communities to untold successes.”

Insurance Commissioner Vicki Schmidt added “I would like to congratulate the 2020 winners on their excellent essays on the importance of financial literacy. The Covid-19 crisis has shown us just how important financial literacy is for students and families and I am proud of these students for preparing themselves for the future.”

To be eligible for this scholarship, students must have completed a financial literacy program that aligns with the Kansas financial literacy K-12 standards, and they must be attending a Kansas technical school, college or university in the Fall of 2020. To enter, the students were asked to submit a two-part essay. The first part discussed how they learned about money management, and its effect on their approach to managing financial decisions for their continued education. For the second part, they described how they used the knowledge gained through their financial literacy program and personal experience. The essay also required research and interviews.

Two high school financial literacy teachers were also recognized for their commitments to their students. Steve Buss from Jefferson West High School was honored as the teacher of, and coincidentally the father of, first-place winner Riley Buss. Mr. Buss includes financial literacy as a part of his agribusiness class. Aaron Dirks, a financial literacy teacher from Scott Community High School was recognized as the teacher who had the most students submit essays. Both teachers will receive \$500 gift cards to use for educational supplies.

Riley Buss's winning essay and additional information about the winners will be available on the website of the Office of the State Bank Commissioner, www.osbckansas.org.

Educating Kansas consumers is an important part of the missions of the Kansas agencies sponsoring these scholarships. There are many different financial literacy programs and curriculum used in high schools and this contest challenges students to use that knowledge to research and analyze decisions they will make for their futures. The scholarships are funded by fines imposed upon, or settlements reached with, companies within the jurisdictions of the sponsoring state offices; no taxpayer monies are used.

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The OSBC regulates all state-chartered banks, trust companies, mortgage businesses, supervised lenders, credit service organizations, and money transmitters that do business in the State of Kansas. The mission of the OSBC is to ensure the integrity of regulated providers of financial services through responsible and proactive oversight, while protecting and educating consumers.

The mission of the KID, and its division, the KSC, is to Regulate. Educate. Advocate.